



# The Many Facets of Leadership

## DECEMBER 2025



Vicki Holden, CFWC Leadership Chair, Editor

**Editor's Note:** *How many of you have noticed there is an emerging leader in your club/district that has good ideas, is responsible, is willing to do the work BUT seems uncomfortable to stand up speak out.? Do members resist taking a position of leadership because they are not at ease in front of a microphone? What if, we worked with all of our members about Public Speaking.? Let's encourage those very hesitant ones, help those who do speak up but are ill at ease, and work with those who seem comfortable to further enhance those skills. Here are few ideas for those on various levels of comfort to reach greater heights.*

### Public Speaking for Beginners: A Simple Guide

#### 1. Start with the Right Mindset

- **Nervousness is normal.** Even experienced speakers feel it — the key is managing it, not eliminating it.
- **Focus on your message, not yourself.** You're there to share something valuable, not to perform perfectly.

#### 2. Know Your Audience

- Ask: *Who are they? What do they care about?*
- Tailor your tone, examples, and length to fit them. Speaking to students feels different than addressing professionals.

#### 3. Prepare, Don't Memorize

- Outline your main 3-4 key points.
- Write short **bullet notes**, not a full script.
- Practice aloud — focus on the flow, not word-for-word recall.

#### 4. Open Strong

- Start with something that grabs attention:

A short story

A surprising fact

A question ("Have you ever...?")

A quote

Example: "Did you know more people fear public speaking than death?"

#### 5. Use Your Body and Voice

- **Posture:** Stand tall, relaxed shoulders.
- **Eye contact:** Look at one person for a full sentence, then move to another.
- **Gestures:** Use natural hand movements to emphasize points.
- **Voice:** Vary your tone, speed, and volume to keep people engaged.



## 6. Handle Nervousness

- **Breathe deeply** before and during your talk.
- **Pause** when needed — silence shows control.
- **Smile** — it calms you and warms the audience.

## 7. Practice Often

- Record yourself or practice in front of a friend.
- Join a supportive group like **Toastmasters**.
- Start small — even a 2-minute talk counts.

## 8. End with Impact

- Summarize your main message.
- Leave the audience with a **call to action**, quote, or takeaway.
- Example: “Remember — confidence isn’t the absence of fear, it’s speaking even when you’re afraid.”

# Public Speaking for Intermediate Speakers

## 1. Refine Your Structure

You already know how to make an outline — now, make it **strategic**.

Classic structure for impact:

- **Hook** – Grab attention (story, question, stat).
- **Promise** – Tell them what they’ll gain.
- **Body** – 3 main points with examples or data.
- **Close** – Reinforce key message, inspire or challenge them.

*Tip:* Use transitions like “Let’s explore why that matters...” or “That brings us to the next idea...” to keep flow smooth.

## 2. Master Storytelling

Facts tell. Stories sell.

- Use **short, vivid stories** to make abstract points stick.
- Follow the “**STAR**” method:

- ⇒ **Situation**
- ⇒ **Task**
- ⇒ **Action**
- ⇒ **Result**

- Include emotional details and a clear takeaway.

*Goal:* One good story per 5–7 minutes of talk time.



### 3. Strengthen Your Delivery

You've got presence — now refine it.

- **Vocal variety:** Shift pitch, speed, and pauses to emphasize key points.
- **Intentional gestures:** Plan gestures that match your words.
- **Eye contact zones:** Divide your audience into 3–5 zones and make balanced contact.
- **Movement:** Step forward for emphasis, pause mid-stage for reflection.

*Practice tip:* Record and watch your hand movements, filler words (“uh,” “like”), and pacing.

### 4. Deepen Audience Engagement

Move beyond “talking at” to **connecting with**.

- Ask rhetorical or real questions.
- Use polls or short audience interactions.
- Mirror the audience’s energy — if they’re quiet, use humor or personal connection to lift the mood.

### 5. Develop Your Authentic Style

Stop imitating others. Build your own voice.

- Are you **inspirational, informative, or humorous** by nature?
- Lean into what feels natural — people can sense authenticity.
- Develop signature habits: a phrase, a gesture, or a storytelling rhythm that’s *you*.

### 6. Handle Q&A Like a Pro

- Listen fully before answering.
- Repeat or rephrase the question for clarity.
- If you don’t know: admit it confidently (“That’s a great point — I’ll find out and follow up.”)
- Keep answers short and audience-focused.

### 7. Polish the Details

- Fine-tune slides — clean, visual, minimal text.
- Check pacing (aim for ~125–150 words per minute).
- End strong — a memorable final line or call to action.

### 8. Keep Leveling Up

- Seek feedback from trusted peers.
- Watch professional speakers and analyze techniques.
- Experiment with humor, silence, or movement to expand your range.

....oooOooo....

Comments and suggestions for future topics may be sent to [cfcleadership@gmail.com](mailto:cfcleadership@gmail.com)



## 1. Master Emotional and Psychological Dynamics

At this level, your job isn't just to inform — it's to **move** people.

- Use **emotional arcs**: tension → insight → resolution.
- Employ **contrast**: light/dark, problem/solution, failure/success.
- Tap into **universal emotions** — hope, fear, belonging, pride.

Craft *moments* that make audiences feel *seen*.

*Example:* "We've all had that moment when we felt invisible — until someone believed in us."

## 2. Craft Signature Talks

You're not giving speeches anymore — you're creating *experiences*.

- Build a **signature talk** (15–20 minutes) that showcases your unique expertise and story.
- Use **modular storytelling** — short stories or segments you can rearrange for different audiences.
- Polish **taglines** or **signature phrases** that people remember ("Leaders don't wait for the moment — they create it.")

## 3. Master the Stage

Your presence speaks before you do.

- **Own the space:** Move with intention. Each step signals control.
- **Use silence strategically:** A well-placed pause can be more powerful than a sentence.
- **Spatial storytelling:** Assign parts of your stage to parts of your story (e.g., left = past, right = future).
- **Energy management:** Modulate intensity to match audience rhythm — lift them, then let them breathe.

*Pro tip:* Watch TED Talks with the sound off. Study how speakers use posture, gestures, and stillness.

## 4. Advanced Rhetorical Techniques

Influence is built through language mastery. Try:

- **Rule of Three:** "Simple. Strong. Memorable."
- **Call and Response:** "You know what I mean?" / "Can you relate?"
- **Repetition for rhythm:** "We will rise. We will rebuild. We will remember."
- **Parallel structure** for emphasis and clarity.
- **Callbacks:** Refer back to an earlier story or line near the end — it creates narrative satisfaction.

## 5. Read and Respond to the Room

You're not performing *at* an audience — you're *dancing with* them.

- Adjust tone, pacing, and humor in real time.
- Watch for micro-feedback: posture shifts, nods, murmurs.
- If energy drops, tell a story, ask a question, or break the fourth wall.
- Command attention with **quiet authority** — you don't always need volume to hold a crowd.



## 6. Handle High-Stakes Speaking

For keynotes, media, or leadership speeches:

- **Start with silence** before your first line — let the room settle.
- **Rehearse under stress:** lights, cameras, distractions.
- **Know your first 60 seconds and last 30 seconds cold.**
- Prepare **pivot lines** for interruptions, tech issues, or hecklers.

*Example:* “Looks like the mic’s got stage fright — let’s give it a moment!”

## 7. Build Thought Leadership

At this level, you’re shaping ideas, not just presenting them.

- Develop and share **original frameworks or metaphors**.
- Publish or record your key talks.
- Mentor upcoming speakers. Teaching reinforces mastery.
- Seek out **TEDx, conferences, or panels** — not just to speak, but to lead conversations.

## 8. Embody Gravitas

Advanced speakers radiate calm authority.

- Speak less, mean more.
- Pause with purpose.
- Make deliberate eye contact — one person at a time
- Let silence be part of your message.

### Ultimate Goal

To transform speaking from a skill into a **tool of influence, leadership, and legacy**.

....oooOooo....

The 1960-1962 GFWC International President was Mildred Ahlgren from Indiana. She was often spoke at GFWC Conventions, frequently representing the group of Past GFWC Presidents. At almost every opportunity, she referred to advice given to her by her father.

STAND UP TO BE SEEN,  
SPEAK OUT TO BE HEARD,  
SIT DOWN TO BE LIKED.

Perhaps we should also follow his advice?